

The Lion

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THE 'OUR FATHER' AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

By Subdeacon James Tochiara

THE only way to understand the Lord's Prayer, what we also call the "Our Father," is to be Orthodox. That is a bold claim, but indulge me.

First, let's examine the prayer. Why is it called the Lord's Prayer? It is not a prayer that the Lord Jesus prayed. It is a prayer for His disciples to pray. The disciples said, "Lord, teach us how to pray." Additionally, it is not a prayer to Jesus, but rather to the Father ("Our Father..."). If it is the Lord's Prayer, it is only because He taught the prayer. He seems to be almost wholly absent from it.

But not so fast. I think it is the Lord's Prayer, and that He is in every syllable. I will show you why.

When the disciples came to Christ and asked Him how to pray, He could have given them any prayer He desired. What should He tell them? If He were concerned with teaching the Unity or Majesty of God, He could have told them the Shema – *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD*. On the other hand, if He wanted to teach them morality and piety, He could have summarized the Law – *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; And thy neighbor as thyself*. Or, if He wanted to teach them about the mystical heights of the angels and their heavenly praise, He could have taught them the *Sanctus* – *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; Heaven and earth are full of thy glory; Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High*. With such an opportunity, He gave them the Our Father.

How should we understand it? Of course, we live in a world dominated by Protestant and Roman Catholic forces, and further confused by secular influences hostile to the religion of Jesus Christ. On the



surface the Lord's Prayer seems to say this to us: God is in Heaven, respect Him (and His Name), make everyone obedient to what God wants, bless our daily work and labor, God forgives us, we forgive others, spare us suffering, defeat evil.

Not bad, rather pious ... but not so good.

I would say that this misses the point completely. Rather, in this prayer Jesus is asserting – perhaps as explicitly as possible – that He is the Messiah. His disciples are to pray for Him because He is the Great High Priest in the Temple, He is the Righteous One who will wield God's power and judgment, He is the one triumphantly conquering the world and its Prince, and He is the promised Son of David who will establish God's Kingdom on the earth. It is indicative of His style, the great humility of His serene and confident spirit, that He proclaims His role as Messiah without mentioning Himself directly.

The disciples knew that the divinely ordained way of prayer occurred at the Temple in Jerusalem. God Himself had taught Moses and David the ways of presenting prayers and worship to Him. This elaborate

THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD:



SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL

Temple worship was the fulfillment of the principles known by Adam, and passed down to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And yet, God seemed to have abandoned His people – the Temple worship wasn't working. At this time the Temple in Jerusalem was corrupted by Herodian kings, Roman generals, and hypocritical Pharisees. Many of the Pharisees taught that God lived in His Temple, at best, only symbolically (as we would say today).

The disciples sincerely wanted to know how to pray. Was the Temple only a symbol? Could they invoke God on their own? Was it okay to believe that in the Temple worship God was Truly Present? Did God really appear to men? (I wonder what Jesus thought about that idea!) They would have liked Jesus to begin a series of expository lectures outlining the proper calendar, the proper order of readings, the proper governance of the priests and high priests, and so on. They knew the Temple was "broken," and they wanted Jesus to fix it and guarantee that God would be present when they offered prayers.

Our Lord realized that they did not fully grasp what was taking place. How He wished that they could have uttered the epiphany of Peter – "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!*" Notice that in response to the disciples' question on prayer, our Lord does not condemn the Temple worship, nor does He command the stripping of the altar, the abolition of the priesthood, the cessation of incense burning, etc. How could He? Was it not He, mysteriously, as God the Word before He took flesh, who commanded Moses and David to do these things? He could have given His disciples a proper calendar and all the rest, but He knew that He had to start from a more radical perspective.

What is the prayer that Jesus gives them? He gives them the new prayer for the priests who stand in the great hall of the Temple while the Great High Priest enters the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

OUR FATHER ... We are all in some way sons of men, except for Adam, who had to call God "Father" because who else could he call Father? Jesus tells us that the old enmity between God and Man, based on ignorance and sin, has come to an end. We are like the First Man in the Garden before the Fall. The ancient Hebrews knew that the Temple hall represented Eden, in its holiness and nearness to God. Jesus is ordaining his disciples into the universal priesthood of Christian believers. If we stand in the Eden of the Temple where God is present, we are given the awesome privilege of calling God "Father".

WHO ART IN HEAVEN ... In the Holy of Holies was the Cherubim Throne, where Moses and David conversed with God the Word ("*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven*"). By measuring and separating off the Holy of Holies, and consecrating the ground, the Bible tells us that God will be present there. God honors such a place because it tells the truth about His divinity and holiness. Jesus demands that His disciples believe God is truly present in Temple worship. The priests are in Eden and God is in Heaven, waiting for the High Priest to enter the Holy of Holies.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME ... The High Priest bears the Name of God, carries it, as it were, when He enters the Holy of Holies. The Holy Name was inscribed upon the High Priest's crown. This phrase basically says, "May your High Priest be worthy, O God, to bear your Name and to execute your judgments." Jesus is teaching his disciples, us, how to offer

priestly prayer for Himself. Just as we bless the God who blesses us, so do we pray for the Messiah who prays for us. Jesus is the Great High Priest – pray for Him because He bears the Holy Name of God.

THY KINGDOM COME ... We are imploring Jesus to serve the Temple worship, to hallow the Name, and bring the power of God to this world. God was extremely clear in His instruction to Moses and David that His power was not to be invoked frivolously or haphazardly. And who knows better than God the Word how to bring down the power of God? *“No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven”* (Jn 3:13). *“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.”* (Psalm 45:3)

THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN ... The will of God is for life to flourish, as it flourishes vibrantly in Heaven. Who has the power of healing, which is the power of judgement, that is the power to set all things aright where they flourish? In this world, that power is granted to the Righteous High Priest, who coming forth from the Holy of Holies, and bearing God's Name, declares the Jubilee Year when God's power renews the people, the Temple, the earth, the universe. Again, Jesus tells us to pray because He is the chosen one through whom the will of God shall be manifested – the Holy One of Israel.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY [epiousios] BREAD ... “Give us this day our EPIOUSIOS bread” – the Greek word in the text is *epiousios*, a word that doesn't appear anywhere else in literature. It is like “epiphany” which is an appearance of God. *“Epiou-sios”* means “upon the substance,” literally. It is holiness “upon the substance” of the bread that somehow transforms the bread. During the Jubilee, God provides our sustenance because we are forbidden

to work. Our bread comes from God, just as manna came from Heaven. God provides.

It is this reality that the Hebrew priests celebrated, when they drank the wine offering and ate the holy bread that had been in the presence of God. This petition for bread underscores the Jubilee, as well as our priesthood in Christ. If we can receive the epiousios bread daily, we are priests after the Order of Melchizedek, who offered bread and wine to the Most High God, that is the Father, just as Christ offers Himself to the Father on our behalf. Some of the priests of the old worship ate the manna, and yet they died. The Lord Jesus offers us not only the holy bread of the old Temple, but the fulfillment of that holy bread, His very Body and Blood. For His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed (Jn 6:55).

Extendit manus

Pa-ter no-ster, qui es in coe-lis: Sancti-fi-cé-tur nomen tu-um:

Ad-vé-ni-at reg-num tu-um: Fi-at vo-lún-tas tu-a, sic-ut

in coe-lo, et in ter-ra. Pa-nem nó-strum quo-ti-di-a-num

da no-bis hó-di-e: Et di-mít-te no-bis dé-bi-ta no-stra, sic-

ut et nos di-mít-ti-mus de-bi-tó-ri-bus nostris. Et ne nos in-

dú-cas in ten-ta-ti-ó-nem. R. Sed lí-be-ra nos a ma-lo.

Sacerdos secreta dicit: Amen.

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US ... Sins of trespass were sins against our neighbors and fellows, not the sins of blasphemy or sacrilege. This petition refers specifically to the harmony of the Christian community. Just as God provides for us during the Jubilee, God's Spirit establishes the brotherhood of all those in the Church of Christ. Of course, before the

Great High Priest proclaims the Jubilee, He offers a sacrifice to atone for all our sins. Recognizing that the High Priest is interceding for our forgiveness, we pray in the same manner. When God's judgment rushes out from the Holy of Holies, we need to have the spirit of forgiveness. If we do, we will delight in the judgment. If we don't, this same power will torment us.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN. This petition declares faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Jesus cannot lead us to where we are tempted, suffer, or undergo trial. His leadership is divine. Likewise, He

does not win a partial battle over Satan and evil. He *delivers* us, eternally, from evil. With this petition, we ask Him to march from the Temple in glory, to claim His authority and to judge the world.

When you pray the Lord's Prayer, this is what you should imagine. First, the company of priests (all Christians) with the Great High Priest enter the Temple (the church building). Then, the High Priest, Jesus of Nazareth, bearing the Name of God, enters into the Holy of Holies (the Sanctuary, where we keep our altar and tabernacle) and communes with the Most High God. "*The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.*" (Ps 11:4) When He returns, He offers us the holy bread, his own broken flesh, which imparts holiness, and communion with divinity. In this special dispensation of the power of God, all trespasses are forgiven and men live in harmony and brotherhood. This victory is an everlasting kingdom.

Pray this and think of the Mass, the Divine Liturgy. Picture Christ leading your priest, and this image communicates everything in the Lord's Prayer. Our Mass is a foretaste of the perfection of the Kingdom to come. If anyone asks an Orthodox Christian why he worships God the way he does, he can honestly answer that Jesus Christ taught him. We do not simply talk about Jesus as Messiah and Great High Priest, we do His worship. Jesus understood Himself fulfilling the pattern of worship that Moses received, and we perform His fulfilled worship.

Not only that, but this prayer was perfectly appropriate before His crucifixion, and it's perfectly appropriate after His crucifixion. However, it does not apply when we reach Heaven, after the Second Coming, and this is instructive as well. Of course, it is not harmful to think of Heaven, but our first and most pressing need is to address our situation in this world. Christ teaches us to focus on the NOW, our fallen world, and the battle therein.

The Lord's Prayer is the Temple worship which Christ (born under the Law, crucified and risen) transforms, shrinks down into a nutshell, and compresses into its essence. Conversely, our Divine Liturgy, Western and Eastern Rites, is the Lord's Prayer expanded to the full expression of the New Temple. If you can't attend the Divine Liturgy, the Lord's Prayer comes as close as possible. Just as the Creed sums up all the theological knowledge of the Church of Christ, so does the Lord's Prayer sum up Christ's

understanding of prayer, worship, salvation, and the order of the cosmos. It is a perfect prayer.

In the ancient Western Rite of the Roman liturgy, the priest prayed the majority of the Our Father by himself. I enjoy everyone praying the Our Father in the Divine Liturgy, but there is great wisdom, strong doctrine, and profound theology in the ancient custom. The priest alone praying the Our Father underscores the fact that Christ is the true priest of the sacraments. This custom humbles the priest, requiring him to signify a greater power than himself at the time when he is the center of attention. In the opinion of St. Gregory the Great, the Apostles said the Our Father to consecrate the gifts of bread and wine.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we proclaim our priesthood, but the prayer makes us as humble as He who made the prayer. We proclaim our priesthood, but only by proclaiming Christ's High Priesthood. We are in the Temple, but only to pray for Him who enters the Holy of Holies. We pray to the Father, but only that His Son might be worthy and glorified. We recognize Christ's divinity, but only in relation to the Father. We pray that Christ might fulfill His mission, but only to unleash the power of the Holy Ghost upon a cosmos groaning for healing and renewal.

With this prayer, the entire cosmos are put in order – the Trinity is shown to men, and mankind finds its destiny in the holiness of Eden and beyond. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus shows us the true principles of worship – the principles that He wants us to preserve from the Temple. There is no mention of slaughtering rams and such like, because He would be the Victim. On the other hand, He expands the priesthood, emphasizes the offering of Melchizedek, and He instructs us how to pray not for a vain hope but for the now-revealed Messiah. The same unleashing of Power and Glory from the Temple still happens at every Mass.

How subtle, how perfect, and how beautiful is Christ! He knows that He will be stretched upon the Cross for our sake, and He wants us to know our part. He certainly has great respect for the work His Father has given Him, and He knows the meaning of His death. He exercises His authority only to teach us how to pray to the Father. We praise Him without mentioning Him, and declare ourselves completely dependent upon Him without uttering His Name. How lofty is the mind of Christ, and how unspeakably pure is the faith of Christ! §

NOVEMBER MMV

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 CHRIST THE KING Matins, 7:30 AM Low Mass, 8 AM School, 9:10 AM Sung Mass, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM (& Benediction)	31 The Vigil of All Saints I Evensong of All Saints, 4 PM	1 THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Mass, 6:30 PM <i>II Evensong of All Saints, with Vespers of the Dead, 7:30 PM</i>	2 ALL SOULS' DAY <i>Lauds of the Dead, 7 AM</i> Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Evensong, 4 PM	3 Within Octave Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM <i>DU Evensong, 4 PM</i>	4 Within Octave Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	5 S. RAPHAEL OF BROOKLYN, B.C. Matins, 8:30 AM Latin Mass, 9 AM Book Study, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM
6 TRINITY XIX Matins, 7:30 AM Low Mass, 8 AM School, 9:10 AM Sung Mass, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM (& Benediction)	7 Within the Octave of All Saints	8 PATRIARCHS & PROPHETS OF THE OLD LAW	9 DEDICATION OF LATERAN BASILICA, ROME Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Evensong, 4 PM	10 Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha, Mm. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM <i>DU Evensong, 4 PM</i>	11 S. MARTIN OF TOURS, B.C. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	12 S. Martin of Rome, B.M. Matins, 8:30 AM Latin Mass, 9 AM Book Study, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM
13 TRINITY XX Matins, 7:30 AM Low Mass, 8 AM School, 9:10 AM Sung Mass, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM (& Benediction)	14 S. Gregory Palamas, B.C.D.	15 <i>Feria</i>	16 <i>Feria</i> Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Evensong, 4 PM	17 S. Gregory the Wonderworker, B.C. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM <i>DU Evensong, 4 PM</i>	18 Dedication of the Basilicas of Ss. Peter & Paul in Rome Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	19 S. Pontianus of Rome, B.M. Matins, 8:30 AM Latin Mass, 9 AM Book Study, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM
20 SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT Matins, 7:30 AM Low Mass, 8 AM School, 9:10 AM Sung Mass, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM (& Benediction)	21 PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY	22 S. Cecilia, V.M.	23 S. Clement of Rome, B.M. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Evensong, 4 PM	24 S. Chrysogonus Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	25 S. Catherine of Alexandria, V.M. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	26 S. Peter of Alexandria, B.M. Matins, 8:30 AM Latin Mass, 9 AM Book Study, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM
27 ADVENT I Matins, 7:30 AM Low Mass, 8 AM School, 9:10 AM Sung Mass, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM (& Benediction)	28 <i>Feria</i> <div> The next Benedictine Retreat (Oblates) will be held on Saturday, December 10 </div>	29 Vigil of S. Andrew	30 S. ANDREW, APOSTLE Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Mass, 12 noon Evensong, 4 PM	1 <i>Feria</i> Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM <i>DU Evensong, 4 PM</i>	2 S. Bibiana, V.M. Matins, 7 AM Mass, 7:30 AM Evensong, 4 PM	3 <i>Feria (Of S. Mary)</i> Matins, 8:30 AM Latin Mass, 9 AM Book Study, 10 AM Evensong, 4 PM

Copies of the new how-to booklet, *Confession for Christians*, are available from Lancelot Andrewes Press. Each parishioner may have a copy of the book at no cost, if he or she promises to make a sacramental Confession sometime during this coming Advent Season.

Thanks be to God for 130 Years of Saint Mark's Parish of Denver



ABOVE – Saint Mark's Vestry. *Front row* – Susan Mahan (Treasurer), Nancy Stuart Steffen (Junior Warden), Subdeacon James Tochiara. *Back row* – Reader Richard Murray, Reader Capt. Andrew Diederich, Darren Payne, Reader Stephen Greenlee (Senior Warden) and Lynn VanDenBos (Secretary) and Reader Michael Huseby (not pictured).

RIGHT – The Faithful donated over \$5,000 and volunteers put together over 300 health kits for the appeal from Metropolitan Philip after Hurricane Katrina. Thanks to Jennifer and Rosalyn who assembled many of the health kits and all who contributed to the supplies, the postage, and the petrol.



"Bridging the Gap"

By Frank Zaverl, a Court Appointed
Special Advocate for Children

"BRIDGING the Gap" is a three year pilot project operated by Mile High United Way and funded by the Jim Casey Foundation to create financial, educational, vocational, health care, entrepreneurial and recreational opportunities for alumni of the foster care system and youth still in foster care. Ages of the youth in the program range from 14-23.

The current outcome statistics for former foster youth are dismal. High percentages of them are at one time or another homeless, even when they are in college and living in dormitories because they have no where to go when the dorms close for the holidays. But very few make it to college. Many are unemployed, most are uneducated (less than 1/2 graduate from high school according to some statistics), and a significant percentage end up in the criminal justice system at one time or another.

What these kids experience is in great contrast to what most of our children experience. The typical American young person today, according to surveys, is not independent until age 26. And even after that, you know that we are in the habit of helping our children forever – maybe not financially – but with wisdom, love, encouragement, communication, holiday get-togethers, and other family events. Most foster youth have no families and typically have no one else to turn to in life. They don't have grandparents to go to for advice and companionship and a connection to an older generation, not even an involved mother or father. At age 18 they are out of the foster care system and on their own – ready or not. To us as Christians, this is unacceptable.

The Bridging the Gap program is not designed to last forever as a program per se. Rather, it is designed to be a vehicle for change, a change in the mindset of society, so that the community at large in the future will routinely and instinctively work with this special population of young people to assist them to have a successful role in society – educated, experienced with the banking system, skilled at saving funds for important things, law-abiding, productive, and aware of how not to repeat the errors of parenting that put them into the jeopardy of foster care. Seventy-five young people will be involved in the program

each year so in total 225 foster youth will be in the program from beginning to end.

Among other aspects of the program, Individual Development Accounts (IDA's) will be established for each participant under a fairly new social concept which develops "assets for the poor," a concept that teaches the value of asset building and development rather than mere handouts. The youth can earn money at jobs, for example, and for each dollar they save, the program will match \$1, up to \$1,000 per year. There will also be cash incentives offered for achieving goals such as graduation, grade point averages, etc., etc. The youth can draw on their IDA's for housing, schooling, health care, transportation, and making investments.

The program is looking for "door opener" opportunities for these youth. A "door opener" is any opportunity to interface with the community. It might be an employment opportunity, education or other training programs, or interacting with "life coaches" (the term that the youth prefer for "mentors"), obtaining tutoring, writing resumes, being involved with sports activities and other community interests. "Door openers" also include monthly "mixers" with the youth, their life coaches, and other involved parties and might include a "soup and supper club" event, open house at a church with dinner, or afternoon coffee, juice and snacks (called "Java & Juice" meetings).

Eventually, funds might be collected for textbooks, school supplies, tuition and other such things, but at this time the program is not seeking money. It wants human capital (people who will offer their personal time and energy), and churches, organizations, and businesses that will provide a variety of "door opener" opportunities.

If you want to follow the words of wisdom recorded in Matthew 25 in a unique way as a "door opener" or want more information about this important program, contact Philippe Marquis at 303-561-2326 or at philippe.marquis@unitedwaydenver.org.



THE MYSTERY OF ADVENT

DOM PROSPER GUERANGER, OSB

From *The Liturgical Year*

THIS mystery of the coming, or Advent, of Jesus is at once simple and threefold. It is simple, for it is the one same Son of God that is coming; it is threefold, because He comes at three different times and in three different ways.

"In the first coming," says St. Bernard, "He comes in the flesh and in weakness; in the second, He comes in spirit and in power; in the third, He comes in glory and in majesty; and the second coming is the means whereby we pass from the first to the third." [Fifth Sermon for Advent]. This, then, is the mystery of Advent. Let us now listen to the explanation of this threefold visit of Christ, given to us by Peter of Blois, in his third Sermon *de Adventu*:

There are three comings of our Lord; the first in the flesh, the second in the soul, the third at the judgment. The first Mass at midnight, according to those words of the Gospel: *At midnight there was a cry made, Lo the Bridegroom cometh!* But this first coming is long since past, for Christ has been seen on the earth and has conversed among men. We are now in the second coming, provided only we are such as that He may thus come to us; for He has said that if we love Him, He will come unto us and will take up His abode with us. So that this second coming is full of uncertainty to us; for who, save the Spirit of God, knows them that are of God? They that are raised out of themselves by the desire of heavenly things, know indeed when He comes; but whence He cometh, or whither He goeth, they know not. As for the third coming, it is most certain that it will be, most uncertain when it will be; for nothing is more sure than death, and nothing less sure than the hour of death. When they shall say, peace and security, says the Apostle, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape. So that the first coming was humble and hidden, the second is mysterious and full of love, the third will be majestic and terrible. In His first coming, Christ was judged by men unjustly; in His second, He renders us just by His grace; in His third, He will judge all things with justice. In His first, a *lamb*; in His last, a *lion*; in the one between the two, the *tenderest of friends*.

The holy Church, therefore, during Advent, awaits in tears and with ardour the arrival of her Jesus in His first coming. For this, she borrows the fervid expressions of the prophets, to which she joins her own supplications. These longings for the Messiah expressed by the Church, are not a mere commemoration of the desires of the ancient Jewish people; they have a reality and efficacy of their own, an influence in the great act of God's munificence, whereby He gave us His own Son. From all eternity, the prayers of



the ancient Jewish people and the prayers of the Christian Church ascended together to the prescient hearing of God; and it was after receiving and granting them, that He sent, in the appointed time, that blessed Dew upon the earth, which made it bud forth the Saviour.

The Church aspires also to the second coming, the consequence of the first, which consists, as we have just seen, in the visit of the Bridegroom to the bride. This coming takes place, each year, at the feast of Christmas, when the new birth of the Son of God delivers the faithful from that yoke of bondage, under which the enemy would oppress them [Collect for Christmas Day]. The Church, therefore, during Advent, prays that she may be visited by Him Who is her Head and her Spouse; visited in her hierarchy; visited in her members, of whom some are living, and some are dead, but may come to life again; visited, lastly, in those who are not in communion with her, and even in the very infidels, that so they may be converted to the true light, which shines even for them. The expressions of the liturgy which the Church makes use of to ask for this loving and invisible coming, are those which she employs when begging for the coming of Jesus in the flesh; for the two visits are for the same object. In vain would the Son of God have come, nineteen hundred years ago, to visit and save mankind, unless He came again for each one of us and at every moment of our lives, bringing to us and cherishing within us that supernatural life, of which He and His holy Spirit are the sole principle.

But this annual visit of the Spouse does not content the Church; she aspires after a third coming, which will complete all things by opening the gates of eternity. She has caught up the last words of her Spouse, "*Surely I am coming quickly*"; [Apoc. xxii. 20] and she cries out to Him, "*Ah! Lord Jesus! come!*" [Ibid.] She is impatient to be loosed from her present temporal state; she longs for the number of the elect to be filled up, and to see appear, in the clouds of heaven, the sign of her Deliverer and her Spouse. Her desires, expressed by her Advent liturgy, go even as far as this; and here we have the explanation of these words of the beloved disciple in his prophecy: "*The nuptials of the Lamb are come, and His wife hath prepared herself*" [Ibid. xix. 7].

But the day of this His last coming to her will be a day of terror. The Church frequently trembles at the very thought of that awful judgment, in which all mankind is to be tried. She calls it 'a day of wrath, on which, as David and the Sibyl have foretold, the world will be reduced to ashes; a day of weeping and of fear.' Not that she fears for herself, since she knows that this day will for ever secure for her the crown, as being the bride of Jesus; but her maternal heart is troubled at the thought that, on the same day, so many of her children will be on the left hand of the Judge, and, having no share with the elect, will be bound hand and foot, and cast into the darkness, where there shall be everlasting weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is the reason why the Church, in the liturgy of Advent, so frequently speaks of the coming of Christ as a terrible coming, and selects from the Scriptures those passages which are most calculated to awaken a salutary fear in the mind of such of her children as may be sleeping the sleep of sin.

This, then, is the threefold mystery of Advent. The liturgical forms in which it is embodied, are of two kinds: the one consists of prayers, passages from the Bible, and similar formulæ, in all of which, words themselves are employed to convey the sentiments which we have been explaining; the other consists of external rites peculiar to this holy time, which, by speaking to the outward senses, complete the expressiveness of the chants and words.

First of all, there is the number of the days of Advent. Forty was the number originally adopted by the Church, and it is still maintained in the Ambrosian liturgy, and in the eastern Church. If, at a later period, the Church of Rome, and those which follow her liturgy, have changed the number of days, the same idea is still expressed in the four weeks which have been substituted for the forty days. The new birth of our Redeemer takes place after four weeks, as the first nativity happened after four thousand years, according to the Hebrew and Vulgate chronology.

As in Lent, so likewise during Advent, marriage is not solemnized, lest worldly joy should distract Christians from those serious thoughts wherewith the expected coming of the sovereign Judge ought to inspire them, or from that dearly cherished hope which the friends of the Bridegroom [St. John iii. 20] have of being soon called to the eternal nuptial-feast.

The people are forcibly reminded of the sadness which fills the heart of the Church, by the sombre colour of the vestments. Excepting on the feasts of the Saints, purple is the colour she uses; the deacon does not wear the dalmatic, nor the sub-deacon the tunic. Formerly it was the custom, in some places, to wear black vestments. This mourning of the Church shows how fully she unites herself with those true Israelites of old who, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, waited for the Messiah, and bewailed Sion that she had not her beauty, and "Juda, that the sceptre had been taken from him, till He should come Who was to be sent, the expectation of nations." [Gen. xlix. 10] It also signifies the works of penance, whereby she prepares for the second coming, full as it is of sweetness and mystery, which is realized in the souls or men, in proportion as they appreciate the tender love of that Divine Guest, Who has said: "My delights are

to be with the children of men." [Prov. viii. 31] It expresses, thirdly, the desolation of this bride who yearns after her Beloved, Who is long a-coming. Like the turtle dove, she moans her loneliness, longing for the voice which will say to her: "Come from Libanus, my bride! come, thou shalt be crowned. Thou hast wounded my heart." [Cant. iv. 8, 9]

The Church also, during Advent, excepting on the feasts of Saints, suppresses the Angelic canticle, *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*; for this glorious song was sung at Bethlehem over the crib of the divine Babe; the tongues of the Angels are not loosened yet; the Virgin has not yet brought forth her Divine Treasure; it is not yet time to sing, it is not even true to say, "Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will." Again, at the end of Mass, the deacon does not dismiss the assembly of the faithful by the words: *Ite missa est*. He substitutes the ordinary greeting: *Benedicamus Domino!* as though the Church feared to interrupt the prayers of the people, which could scarce be too long during these days of expectation.

In the night Office, the holy Church also suspends, on those same days, the hymn of jubilation, *Te Deum laudamus*. It is in deep humility that she awaits the supreme blessing which is to come to her; and, in the interval, she presumes only to ask, and entreat, and hope. But let the glorious hour come, when in the midst of darkest night the Sun of Justice will suddenly rise upon the world: then indeed she will resume her hymn of thanksgiving, and all over the face of the earth the silence of midnight will be broken by this shout of enthusiasm: "We praise Thee, O God! we acknowledge Thee to be our Lord! Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory, the everlasting Son of the Father! Thou being to deliver man didst not disdain the Virgin's womb!"

On the ferial days, the rubrics of Advent prescribe that certain prayers should be said kneeling, at the end of each canonical Hour, and that the choir should also kneel during a considerable portion of the Mass. In this respect, the usages of Advent are precisely the same as those of Lent.

But there is one feature which distinguishes Advent most markedly from Lent: the word of gladness, the joyful *Alleluia*, is not interrupted during Advent, except once or twice during the ferial Office. It is sung in the Masses of the four Sundays, and vividly contrasts with the sombre colour of the vestments. On one of these Sundays, the third, the prohibition of using the organ is removed, and we are gladdened by its grand notes, and rose-coloured vestments may be used instead of the purple. These vestiges of joy, thus blended with the holy mournfulness of the Church, tell us, in a most expressive way, that though she unites with the ancient people of God in praying for the coming of the Messiah (thus paying the debt which the entire human race owes to the justice and mercy of God), she does not forget that the Emmanuel is already come to her, that He is in her, and that even before she has opened her lips to ask Him to save her, she has been already redeemed and predestined to an eternal union with Him. This is the reason why the *Alleluia* accompanies even her sighs, and why she seems to be at once joyous and sad, waiting for the coming of that holy night which will be brighter to her than the most sunny of days, and on which her joy will expel all her sorrow. §

Dear Faithful of Saint Mark's,

GOD help us, there still may be some among us who think the Bishop or the Emperor or the government pay for the program and facilities of the Church. Not so. The parish Church is likely the last entity that is entirely supported by the voluntary giving of the Faithful who make up her local community and congregation. It is therefore the obligation of every believer of whatever age* or means** to make a weekly donation*** to the life and witness of the Church.

Those who do not, or will not, or must not, for whatever reasons, should seriously consider the whole matter of whether Jesus Christ is God and whether that means anything in their own lives. If not, then spend that which is due to God on some other and more important cause ... like candy, or liquor, or tech toys, or bigger TVs, or a softer mattress and a fluffier pillow ... The observation never goes away, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

If the Church is not on your list of regular expenses, then better hurry up and figure out where your hope is, where your destiny is, and what the blue blazes you are in this life for ... and invest in that. Power, pleasure, and riches are obvious options and each has its own reward sooner or later. Pledge Cards for the new Year of Grace 2006 are available at Saint Mark's Church and are included in the November mailing of *The Lion* newsletter.

Blessings upon all who respond dutifully to this pious cause. A purple stole and the Confessional for all who blow it off with excuses. Either way, see you soon in Church.

Our thanks to all who have endured the latest round of building repairs and construction at Saint Mark's. Five years ago we tore up the choir to put in the beautiful Rose window. Three years ago we demolished the sanctuary to put in the new Altar and furnishings. This year we devastated the entire Nave to put in new roof trusses and a new roof with extensive repairs to the pilasters and walls. God helping us, we should have our temple back better than ever by about mid-November.

Yours in Christ,
Father John

* Yes, "age" because kids should get nicked for a tithe off their pathetic allowance just as they must eat vegetables, get shots, and have their teeth cleaned, wear clothes, and pray for their teachers and their parents.

** Yes, "means" because the more broke you are, the better it is to get God involved in a percentage and working as an experienced partner in your financial development.

*** Yes, "weekly" although this can just as well be expressed in a monthly or annual check.



On the way back from a week in Rome, Fr John visited our brilliant scholar, Subdeacon Jeffrey Stout at Oxford, England. Here Jeff stands in the courtyard of Saint Cross College adjacent to Pusey House whose library and chapel are notable 19th c. additions to the beauty and piety of the University. We served Vespers here with other Orthodox faithful thanks to the hospitality of the Principal, Fr Michael.

THE LION

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